



Tom Barrett
Mayor

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MAYOR BARRETT HOSTS PANDEMIC INFLUENZA BUSINESS SUMMIT

Event aimed at providing local area businesses and schools an overview of current preparedness plans and possible impact to business operations

Milwaukee, WI (December, 2005) – Mayor Barrett and the City of Milwaukee Health Department are sponsoring a “Pandemic Influenza Business Summit” to be held tomorrow, December 15, 2005 at the University Club located at 924 E. Wells Street from 7:30-9:00 a.m. This forum will provide businesses with an update on the city’s preparedness plan and discuss ways in which they can prepare for an influenza pandemic and reduce overall impact to their organizations as well as participate in a coordinated community response plan.

The recent release of the Federal National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza by the White House and Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has highlighted the need for community planning now rather than later to mitigate the devastating effects of a pandemic scenario. The City of Milwaukee has developed a written plan to respond to an influenza pandemic that is consistent with federal and state guidance. This plan not only outlines coordination of first responder agencies and resources, but also the importance of integrating private sector businesses as key stakeholders in the planning process.

“It’s difficult to say when the next influenza pandemic will take place,” said Mayor Tom Barrett. “If a pandemic influenza outbreak were to occur, it could have wide-ranging impact on our community.”

Business “Continuity of Operations Planning” (COOP) assures that private sector infrastructure, critical to the lifeblood of an urban center like Milwaukee, is adequately maintained throughout the duration of a pandemic episode. Business COOP in this context, addresses such issues as identification of essential core services and associated staffing; impact of prolonged reduction in

workforce; effects of critical infrastructure disruption on business operations; and supply chain and inventory vulnerability.

“People should plan ahead for situations in which they might have to take care of themselves and family members without leaving home for an extended period of time”, said Commissioner of Health Bevan K. Baker. “Right now, the bird flu (H5N1) virus currently being found in Southeast Asia has not spread from human to human and an influenza pandemic is not imminent, although this could change very quickly.”

An influenza pandemic is a global disease outbreak that occurs when an influenza virus that had not previously infected humans easily spreads from person to person. History has shown that influenza pandemics occur 3 to 4 times every 100 years. Health officials stress that it is always a good idea to be prepared for an emergency.

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